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### NASA spacecraft with UM software launches today

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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This release is available electronically on INN (News Net.)

Dec. 16, 1999

### **NASA SPACECRAFT WITH UM SOFTWARE LAUNCHES TODAY**

#### **VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, CALIF. --**

**By Cary Shimek  
University Relations**

The University of Montana's Steve Running started designing software for NASA's Earth Observing System about the time his youngest daughter, Emily, was born.

Well, Emily is now in college, and the space agency is finally ready to launch into orbit the fruits of 18 years of labor by Running's Numerical Terradynamic Simulation Group. The countdown has already started for an 11:33 a.m. MST launch of the Terra satellite from California's Vandenberg Air Force Base. A Live Launch Viewing will be held at UM in Science Complex Room 428.

The size of a small bus, Terra will be taken aloft aboard a 165-foot-tall Atlas IIAS rocket. At 10,506 pounds, Terra will be the largest payload an Atlas has ever carried. The rocket was modified to compensate for the added weight.

Running spent Wednesday touring Vandenberg's launch facilities and meeting with fellow researchers and NASA administrators. He said he is trying to relax and not worry about a launch failure.

"I've waited so long for this launch that I resolved to just sit back and enjoy myself," he said. "This is a major international science event that happens only once or twice in a

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career. I think a good analogy is that this launch is like Michael Jordan shooting free throws. Jordan is the best at that, and NASA is the best at launching rockets, but Jordan still misses one now and then.”

NASA announced a slight glitch in a communication device on the rocket called a remote interface controller during an afternoon news conference Wednesday, but the problem was ironed out by that evening. Thursday’s forecast calls for a clear, somewhat windy launch day at Vandenberg.

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